Revelation 1-3: The Revelation of Jesus Christ and His Messages to the Seven Churches

I. Introduction and Vision of the Glorified Christ (Revelation 1)

A. Prologue: The Revelation of Jesus Christ (1:1-3) 1. Source and Purpose 2. Blessedness of Reading and Heeding 3. Imminent Return

B. Salutation to the Seven Churches (1:4-8) 1. Grace and Peace from God 2. Jesus Christ: Faithful Witness, Firstborn from the Dead, Ruler of Kings 3. His Love and Sacrifice 4. Coming on the Clouds

C. John's Vision on Patmos (1:9-20) 1. John's Circumstances and Spirit on the Lord's Day (1:9-10a) 2. Voice like a Trumpet and Command to Write (1:10b-11) 3. Vision of the Son of Man (1:12-16) a. Among Seven Golden Lampstands b. Clothed with a Long Robe, Golden Sash c. Head and Hair White as Wool d. Eyes like Blazing Fire e. Feet like Burnished Bronze f. Voice like the Roar of Many Waters g. Seven Stars in His Right Hand h. Sharp Double-Edged Sword from His Mouth i. Face like the Sun Shining in Full Strength 4. John's Response and Jesus' Reassurance (1:17-18) a. Fell as Though Dead b. "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last" c. "I am He who lives and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore" d. "I have the keys of Hades and of Death" 5. Command to Write the Things Seen, Present, and Future (1:19) 6. Explanation of the Mystery of the Seven Stars and Seven Lampstands (1:20) a. Seven Stars are the Angels (Messengers) of the Seven Churches b. Seven Lampstands are the Seven Churches

II. Messages to the Seven Churches of Asia Minor (Revelation 2-3) Format for each church: Addressant, Commendation (if any), Rebuke (if any), Exhortation/Warning, Promise to the Overcomer.

A. **To the Church in Ephesus: The Loveless Church (Revelation 2:1-7)** 1. Addressant: He who holds the seven stars and walks among the seven golden lampstands 2. Commendation: Toil, perseverance, discernment, intolerance for evil, endurance for His name's sake 3. Rebuke: You have left your first love 4. Exhortation: Remember, repent, and do the first works 5. Warning: Else I will remove your lampstand 6. Promise to the Overcomer: Will eat from the tree of life in the Paradise of God

B. **To the Church in Smyrna: The Persecuted Church (Revelation 2:8-11)** 1. Addressant: The First and the Last, who was dead and came to life 2. Commendation: Tribulation, poverty (but you are rich), slander from those who say they are Jews but are a synagogue of Satan 3. Rebuke: None 4. Exhortation: Do not fear suffering, faithful unto death 5. Promise to the Overcomer: Will not be hurt by the second death

C. **To the Church in Pergamum: The Compromising Church (Revelation 2:12-17)** 1. Addressant: He who has the sharp two-edged sword 2. Commendation: Hold fast to My name, did not deny My faith even where Satan's throne is (Antipas, My faithful martyr) 3. Rebuke: Some hold the doctrine of Balaam (eating things sacrificed to idols, sexual immorality), some hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans 4. Exhortation: Repent 5. Warning: Else I will come quickly and fight against them with the sword of My mouth 6. Promise to the Overcomer: Hidden manna, a white stone with a new name written on it

D. **To the Church in Thyatira: The Corrupt Church (Revelation 2:18-29)** 1. Addressant: The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire and feet like fine bronze 2. Commendation: Works, love, service, faith, patience; your last works are more than the first 3. Rebuke: You allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols 4. Exhortation: Repent, hold fast what you have 5. Warning: I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent; I will kill her children with death; all the churches shall know I am He who searches the minds and hearts 6. Promise to the Overcomer: Power over the nations, will rule them with a rod of iron, as the potter's vessels shall be broken to pieces; also the morning star.

E. **To the Church in Sardis: The Dead Church (Revelation 3:1-6)** 1. Addressant: He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars 2. Commendation: None directly, but acknowledges a few who have not defiled their garments 3. Rebuke: You have a name that you are alive, but you are dead; your works are not perfect before God 4. Exhortation: Be watchful, strengthen the things which remain and are ready to die; remember how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent 5. Warning: If you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you 6. Promise to the Overcomer: Shall be clothed in white garments, I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life, I will confess his name before My Father and His angels.

F. **To the Church in Philadelphia: The Faithful Church (Revelation 3:7-13)** 1. Addressant: He who is holy, He who is

true, He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens 2. Commendation: Little strength, have kept My word, have not denied My name; I have set before you an open door 3. Rebuke: None 4. Exhortation: Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown 5. Promise to the Overcomer: Will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more; I will write on him the name of My God, the name of the city of My God (New Jerusalem), and My new name.

G. **To the Church in Laodicea: The Lukewarm Church (Revelation 3:14-22)** 1. Addressant: The Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God 2. Commendation: None 3. Rebuke: You are neither cold nor hot; you are lukewarm, and I will vomit you out of My mouth; you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked 4. Exhortation: Buy from Me gold refined in the fire, white garments to cover your nakedness, and eye salve to anoint your eyes; be zealous and repent; behold, I stand at the door and knock 5. Warning: Else I will vomit you out 6. Promise to the Overcomer: Will grant him to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne

Revelation Outline: Chapters 4-19 (7-Year Tribulation, Post-Tribulation Rapture, Parallel-Numbered Judgments)

Core Premise: The entire span of chapters 6-19 constitutes a future, literal 7-Year Tribulation Period. The Seals, Trumpets, and Bowls represent parallel, yet progressively intensifying cycles of God's wrath, with corresponding numbers (e.g., 1st Seal, 1st Trumpet, 1st Bowl) signifying escalating aspects of the same phase of judgment. The church endures this entire period and is raptured at its very end, coinciding with Christ's visible return.

I. The Heavenly Throne Room: Authority for Judgment (Revelation 4-5)
* Chapter 4: God on His Throne * John's vision of God's absolute sovereignty and majesty. * Worship of God as the Creator.
* Chapter 5: The Lamb and the Sealed Scroll * The sealed scroll, containing God's plan for judgment and redemption, which no one is worthy to open. * Jesus Christ, the Lamb who was slain, is uniquely worthy to break the seals and execute the plan. * Universal worship of the Lamb for His redemptive and authoritative power. * Interpretation Note: This sets the divine stage. All subsequent judgments are executed by Christ under God's sovereign authority, initiating the 7-year Tribulation.

II. The Seven Phases of Tribulation Judgment (Spanning the 7-Year Period) * Interpretation Note: These seven phases represent the entire 7-year Tribulation. Each "phase" is characterized by a corresponding Seal, Trumpet, and Bowl, which are not strictly sequential in time, but rather parallel expressions of the same aspect of God's wrath, each escalating in severity.

Phase 1: Initial Disturbances and Widespread Calamity * **Seal 1 (Revelation 6:1-2):** The White Horse – Deceptive conquest, rise of Antichrist, or initial false peace. * **Trumpet 1 (Revelation 8:7):** Hail, Fire, and Blood on Earth – Destruction of a third of vegetation. * **Bowl 1 (Revelation 16:1-2):** Foul and Loathsome Sores – Upon those who worship the Beast. * *Interpretation Note:* This phase signifies the beginning of God's judgment and human suffering. The Seal introduces the theme of dominion, the Trumpet a general environmental strike, and the Bowl a direct, painful, personal judgment, showing intensifying aspects of the same initial outpouring of wrath.

Phase 2: Global Conflict and Environmental Devastation * **Seal 2 (Revelation 6:3-4):** The Red Horse – Great war, peace taken from the earth, widespread killing. * **Trumpet 2 (Revelation 8:8-9):** Burning Mountain in the Sea – A third of the sea turns to blood, destroying a third of sea life and ships. * **Bowl 2 (Revelation 16:3):** The Entire Sea Becomes Blood – Every living creature in the sea dies. * *Interpretation Note:* This phase highlights escalating global conflict and its devastating impact, with the Seal indicating the cause (war), the Trumpet a specific environmental catastrophe, and the Bowl the complete destruction of that element, demonstrating escalating impact.

Phase 3: Famine, Economic Collapse, and Water Contamination * **Seal 3 (Revelation 6:5-6):** The Black Horse – Famine, economic hardship, food rationing. * **Trumpet 3 (Revelation 8:10-11):** Wormwood Star on Waters – A third of freshwaters become bitter, causing death. * **Bowl 3 (Revelation 16:4-7):** Rivers and Springs Turn to Blood – All freshwater sources become blood. * *Interpretation Note:* This phase focuses on the breakdown of life-sustaining resources, moving from general scarcity (Seal) to specific poisoning (Trumpet) and then complete corruption (Bowl), representing intensifying suffering.

Phase 4: Widespread Death and Diminished Creation * **Seal 4 (Revelation 6:7-8):** The Pale Horse – Death over a fourth of the earth by sword, famine, plague, and wild beasts. * **Trumpet 4 (Revelation 8:12-13):** Cosmic Lights Dimmed – A third of the sun, moon, and stars are darkened. * **Bowl 4 (Revelation 16:8-9):** Sun Scorches Humanity – The sun intensifies its heat, scorching people, who refuse to repent. * *Interpretation Note:* This phase encompasses broad death and environmental degradation. The Seal depicts the pervasive mortality, the Trumpet a diminishing of natural light, and the Bowl an agonizing increase in the sun's destructive power, showing escalating forms of judgment.

Phase 5: Persecution and Demonic Torment * **Seal 5 (Revelation 6:9-11):** Martyred Souls – The cry for justice from those slain for their faith during the Tribulation. * **Trumpet 5 (Revelation 9:1-11):** Demonic Locusts (First Woe) – Torment of unsealed humanity for five months. * **Bowl 5 (Revelation 16:10-11):** Darkness on Beast's Kingdom – Deep darkness and agonizing pain, yet no repentance. * *Interpretation Note:* This phase emphasizes the spiritual and direct torment upon humanity. The Seal highlights the suffering of believers, the Trumpet introduces direct demonic torment, and the Bowl deepens the suffering and rebellion in the Antichrist's domain.

Phase 6: Preparation for Final Conflict and the Great Day of Wrath * **Seal 6 (Revelation 6:12-17):** Cosmic Disturbances & Universal Terror – Great earthquake, sun black, moon blood, stars falling, sky recedes. Kings and peoples hide, crying to mountains to fall on them from "the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of His wrath has come!" * **Trumpet 6 (Revelation 9:12-21):** The Euphrates Army (Second Woe) – A vast demonic army kills a third of mankind, yet survivors do not repent. * **Bowl 6 (Revelation 16:12-16):** Euphrates Dries & Armageddon Gathering – The Euphrates dries to prepare the way for kings from the East, gathering them for the battle of Armageddon. * *Interpretation Note:* This phase represents the dramatic escalation towards the final confrontation. The Sixth Seal is a powerful panoramic summary of the "Day of Wrath," while the 6th Trumpet and Bowl detail specific military and demonic preparations for the definitive end of the Tribulation and the Battle of Armageddon. These are all concurrent aspects of the Tribulation's climax.

Phase 7: The Consummation of Wrath and Kingdom Proclamation * **Seal 7 (Revelation 8:1):** Silence in Heaven – A momentous pause before the final judgments are unleashed. * **Trumpet 7 (Revelation 11:15-19):** Kingdom Proclaimed (Third Woe) – Heavenly voices declare, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever!" Signs of God's wrath and judgment are present. * **Bowl 7 (Revelation 16:17-21):** "It Is Done!" – The greatest earthquake, cities fall, islands and mountains vanish, massive hailstones. * *Interpretation Note:* This is the ultimate convergence. The 7th Seal symbolically ushers in the finality. The 7th Trumpet climactically announces the establishment of Christ's kingdom and the final judgment. The 7th Bowl signifies the *absolute completion* of God's wrath upon the earth, making it ready for the arrival of the King. These are the immediate precursors to Christ's physical return.

III. Interludes and Key Players During the 7-Year Tribulation (Concurrent with Phases 1-7)

* Chapter 7: The Sealed 144,000 & The Great Multitude * God's preservation of a special group of Israelites. * The multitude of believers "who come out of the great tribulation," showing God's protection for His church through the tribulation.

* Chapter 10: The Mighty Angel with the Little Scroll * John's commissioning to prophesy further regarding the Tribulation's close.

* Chapter 11: The Two Witnesses (Latter 3.5 Years) * Two powerful prophets ministering during the intense second half of the 7-year Tribulation, killed by the Beast, and resurrected.

* Chapter 12: The Woman, the Dragon, and the Male Child * Symbolic depiction of Israel, Satan, and Christ, showing Satan's intensified persecution of God's people in the latter half of the Tribulation.

* Chapter 13: The Beast from the Sea (Antichrist) & The Beast from the Earth (False Prophet) * The rise and global dominion of the Antichrist, empowered by Satan, and the False Prophet enforcing worship of the Beast and the "mark of the Beast." These figures dominate the mid to latter part of the Tribulation.

* Chapter 14: The Lamb, 144,000, and Angelic Proclamations * A vision of the Lamb and His redeemed. * Three angels proclaim the eternal gospel, the fall of Babylon, and the judgment on those who take the mark of the Beast, serving as

final warnings during the Tribulation.

IV. Final Judgment on Babylon (Revelation 17-18)

* Chapter 17: The Great Harlot on the Beast * Symbolic judgment of a corrupt religious and/or economic system that has allied with the Antichrist during the Tribulation.

* Chapter 18: The Fall of Babylon Proclaimed * Detailed description of Babylon's complete and sudden destruction at the very end of the Tribulation, signifying the end of all worldly opposition to God. * Interpretation Note: This final judgment on the world system is a direct result of the escalating Bowls of wrath and prepares the earth for Christ's reign.

V. The Grand Climax: Christ's Glorious Return and the Post-Tribulation Rapture (Revelation 19)

* Revelation 19:1-10: Heavenly Rejoicing and Marriage Supper of the Lamb * Heavenly hosts rejoice over God's righteous judgments and the fall of Babylon. * The church, having endured the entire 7-year Tribulation, is now prepared for the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, representing its glorious union with Christ.

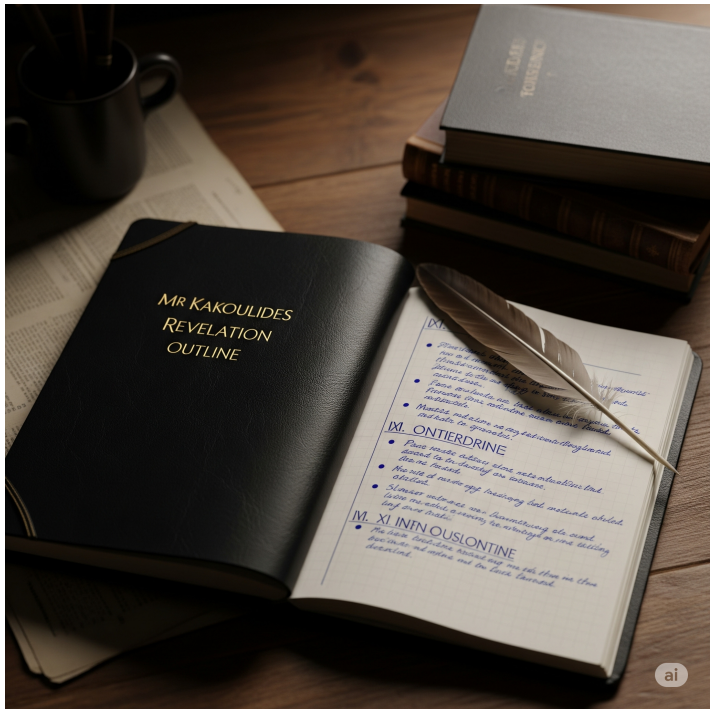
* Revelation 19:11-21: Christ's Second Coming and Defeat of His Enemies * Jesus Christ appears physically on a white horse, accompanied by the armies of heaven (the raptured church). * He strikes down the nations, treads the winepress of the wrath of God, and decisively conquers the Beast and the False Prophet, casting them into the lake of fire. * Interpretation Note: This is the definitive end of the 7-year Tribulation.

The Post-Tribulation Rapture occurs at this precise moment, as the "elect" are gathered (Matthew 24:29-31) and join Christ's returning army to witness and participate in the final defeat of His enemies and the establishment of His earthly kingdom. All the preceding judgments have culminated in this magnificent event.

Revelation 20-22: The Consummation of God's Redemptive Plan

I. The Millennium and Final Judgment (Revelation 20) A. The Binding of Satan and the Millennial Reign of Christ (20:1-6) 1. An angel descends with the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain (20:1) 2. Satan (the dragon, that serpent of old, the Devil, and Satan) is seized, bound for 1,000 years, and cast into the bottomless pit (20:2-3a) 3. The bottomless pit is shut and sealed over him "so that he should not deceive the nations anymore till the thousand years were finished" (20:3b) 4. After this, he must be released for a little while (20:3c) 5. Thrones are seen, and judgment is committed to those who sat on them (20:4a) 6. Souls of those beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshipped the beast or his image and had not received his mark, come to life and reign with Christ for 1,000 years (20:4b) 7. This is the "first resurrection" (20:5a) 8. The rest of the dead do not live again until the 1,000 years are finished (20:5b) 9. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection; over such the second death has no power (20:6a) 10. They shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years (20:6b) B. The Release of Satan and Final Rebellion (20:7-10) 1. When the 1,000 years are finished, Satan will be released from his prison (20:7) 2. He will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them to battle (20:8a) 3. Their number is as the sand of the sea (20:8b) 4. They go up on the breadth of the earth and surround the camp of the saints and the beloved city (20:9a) 5. Fire comes down from God out of heaven and devours them (20:9b) 6. The Devil, who deceived them, is cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are (20:10a) 7. They will be tormented day and night forever and ever (20:10b) C. The Great White Throne Judgment (20:11-15) 1. A great white throne and Him who sat on it; from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away (20:11) 2. The dead, small and great, stand before God (20:12a) 3. Books are opened, and another book is opened, which is the Book of Life (20:12b) 4. The dead are judged according to their works, by the things written in the books (20:12c) 5. The sea gives up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades deliver up the dead who were in them (20:13a) 6. They are judged, each one according to his works (20:13b) 7. Death and Hades are cast into the lake of fire (20:14a) 8. This is the second death (20:14b) 9. Anyone not found written in the Book of Life is cast into the lake of fire (20:15)

II. The New Heaven, New Earth, and New Jerusalem (Revelation 21) A. The New Creation (21:1-8) 1. A new heaven and a new earth appear, for the first heaven and the first earth have passed away (21:1a) 2. The sea is no more (21:1b) 3. The holy city, New Jerusalem, comes down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband (21:2) 4. A loud voice from heaven declares God's dwelling is with men, He will dwell with them, they shall be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God (21:3) 5. God will wipe away every tear, there shall be no more death, sorrow, crying, or pain (21:4) 6. He who sits on the throne declares, "Behold, I make all things new" and "Write, for these words are true and faithful" (21:5) 7. "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End" (21:6a) 8. He will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts (21:6b) 9. He who overcomes shall inherit all

things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son (21:7) 10. But for the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their part is in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death (21:8) B. Description of the New Jerusalem (21:9-27) 1. One of the seven angels with the seven bowls shows John the bride, the Lamb's wife (21:9) 2. He carries John away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain and shows him the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God (21:10) 3. Having the glory of God; her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal (21:11) 4. Great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel (21:12) 5. Three gates on each side (east, north, south, west) (21:13) 6. The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb (21:14) 7. The city's dimensions: pure gold, like clear glass (21:18); foundations adorned with all kinds of precious stones (21:19-20); twelve gates are twelve pearls (21:21a); the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass (21:21b) 8. No temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple (21:22) 9. No need of the sun or moon, for the glory of God illuminates it, and the Lamb is its light (21:23) 10. The nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it (21:24) 11. Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (no night there) (21:25) 12. They shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it (21:26) 13. Nothing unclean shall enter it, nor anyone who defiles or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those written in the Lamb's Book of Life (21:27)

III. The River of Life and the Tree of Life (Revelation 22) A. The River of Life and the Tree of Life (22:1-5) 1. A pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb (22:1) 2. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month (22:2a) 3. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations (22:2b) 4. No more curse (22:3a) 5. The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him (22:3b) 6. They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads (22:4) 7. No night there; no need of a lamp or sun, for the Lord God gives them light (22:5a) 8. They shall reign forever and ever (22:5b) B. Final Exhortations, Warnings, and Blessings (22:6-21) 1. These words are faithful and true (22:6a) 2. The Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things which must shortly take place (22:6b) 3. "Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book" (22:7) 4. John's response and angel's rebuke (do not worship him) (22:8-9) 5. Do not seal the words of the prophecy, for the time is at hand (22:10) 6. Let him who is unjust be unjust still, etc. (finality of spiritual state) (22:11) 7. "And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work" (22:12) 8. "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last" (22:13) 9. Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city (22:14) 10. Outside are dogs, sorcerers, sexually immoral, murderers, idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie (22:15) 11. Jesus sends His angel to testify these things to the churches; He is the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star (22:16) 12. The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely (22:17) 13. Warning against adding to or taking away from the words of this prophecy (22:18-19) 14. Jesus confirms, "Surely I am coming quickly" (22:20a) 15. John's response, "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" (22:20b) 16. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. (22:21)